



ELECTION PROFILE



Sept. 8 Mayoral Primary may suggest new course for Maple Heights Five Candidates Vying For Spot In November Runoff



Donald Grossmyer



Frank Rives Jr



Neomia Mitchell



Bill Brownlee



Anita Blackwell

By **R. T. Andrews**
Editor

MAPLE HEIGHTS — Primaries are often narrow affairs, where only rank-and-file party faithful or super-responsible good-government types honor their citizenship duties to vote. But with the long-term ten-

ure of Mayor Jeff Lansky's exhausted and exhausting administration now coming blessedly to an end, there are signs that this month's primary may be one of the more exciting horse races Cuyahoga County has seen in some time.

The September 8 primary — early voting began the first week of August — will find Maple

Heights voters choosing among five candidates with distinctly different resumes and personalities.

It's a nonpartisan primary, meaning that the ballot won't carry party identification. Labels don't matter much in Maple anyway, where voter tastes are often idiosyncratic: is there another city in America, for instance, where a 75% black ward has strongly

backed a white openly-gay barista as their councilman?

Or how about one where a sitting mayor [Lansky], bolts the Democratic Party and becomes a Republican for four years, only to cross back over again because, well, just because. Probably neither party was disappointed to see him leave their ranks.

In this year's primary, which

incidentally is comprised of two white and three black candidates, the candidate who many suspect of being a Tea Partier — Bill Brownlee — registered this summer as a Democrat.

It might even be considered strange that so many people want to be mayor of a city that could be a poster child for the

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THE BLACK CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Women In The Church Still Bumping Up Against Stained Glass Ceilings

By **Afi-Odelia E. Scruggs**
Special Correspondent

You see her the minute you walk into church. She's the usher in white gloves who or firmly gestures for you to stand in the vestibule until the deacon's prayer has ended.

She's the devout worshipper who covers her head with a small lace handkerchief, so the house of prayer isn't disrespected.

She's the deacon's wife who meticulously shields the communion table so the bread

and wine are protected.

We call her "mother" and "sister." Sometimes we call her "choir director" or "deaconess" or "evangelist."

But we rarely call them "trustee," or "deacon" or "pastor."

You see her the minute you walk into the sanctuary. She seems glued to the pews. But she's almost never in the pulpit.

She's the backbone of the African American church, but seldom its head.

"We're comfortable in women serving, just not in the senior pastor role," says Rev.



Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins,
Senior pastor of South Euclid
United Church of Christ.

Courtney Clayton Jenkins, the senior pastor of South Euclid United Church of Christ.

It took the AME church

more than 200 years to elect a woman as bishop, the denomination's highest office. Rev. Vashti Murphy McKenzie won that post in 2000. She remains the only female bishop, after the retirement of Carolyn Tyler Guidry and the death of Sarah Frances Taylor Davis. Both Guidry and Davis were elected in 2004.

Other more traditional denominations like Church of God In Christ and Baptists, allow women to evangelists or preachers, but balk when it comes to a woman as a pastor.

They, and other who oppose women in such leadership positions, cite Paul's instruction in 1 Timothy 2:12 that says "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must remain silent."

But Clayton Jenkins notes strict adherence to that scripture would mean the end of the African-American church.

"(Paul) means all women be quiet in every shape and form," Clayton Jenkins says. "Women may not be ushers;

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Sept. 8 Mayoral Primary May Suggest New Course For Maple Heights

Continued from Page 1

near-radioactive economic fallout from the collapse of the mortgage market in 2008. Maple Heights was once an idyllic working class suburb, with lots of jobs, easy access to all parts of the county, thriving retail destinations — the once formidable Southgate Shopping Center — and even a grudging tolerance for integration, highly unusual in 1950s and 1960s Cuyahoga County: back then Cleveland Heights had fewer than 2% percent residents of color and the mayor of Shaker Heights was reputed to attend weekly sheriff sales whenever a Shaker house was being auctioned off. His purpose: to ensure that no Negroes snuck in to his pristine suburb through the proverbial back door.

Around that same time, some black families with suburban aspirations were finding their way into Maple. In fact, some still live there, a fact illustrated when a few of them attended a standing room only mayoral candidate forum in July, held at one of the city's crown jewels, a bustling regional branch of the county library system.

It's a far different city now of course. The population, about 23,000 according to the 2010 Census, is barely more than half of what it was the city was nearly bursting at the seams. Today, it's a city that the New York Times profiled last October as the nation's quintessential Ferguson, MO, which is to say a first ring suburb with a largely black population, virtually all-white safety forces, and white folks pretty much running the show politically.

Actually, it's debatable if anyone is actually running the town. Earlier this year, the State Auditor declared the city to be in fiscal emergency, triggering a series of requirements that include the mayor recommending some up-standing citizens for the Governor to appoint to a Financial Planning and Supervision Commission. Mayor Lansky deliberated a long time before submitting his choices, which included two citizens with bankruptcies on their records, and several others who nei-

ther lived nor worked in the city, one of the few criteria for the position. Now, more than six months since the Auditor's declaration, the city has yet to put forth a single person qualified to serve.

Meanwhile, the City Council slumbers through meeting after meeting, challenging neither mayoral action nor mayoral inaction. Most of its members seem in shock over the city's financial collapse, and totally clueless about how to address it.

A significant number of citizens come to council meetings, but they hear little more than dry recitations from a few department heads. Often there isn't even a financial report from the city's finance director.

Still, when more than 150 people attended the summer mayoral forum put on by the city's Democratic Club, it was impossible to ignore the positive feelings most residents had about their city. They seemed not so much angry at the mismanagement as hopeful that one of the candidates could initiate a turnaround.

Maple residents can get angry. They showed it in November 2013 when they overturned a Council vote taken without citizen input to install traffic cameras on city streets. Residents had no problem seeing that action as an assault upon their rights, their privacy, and their wallets, and took the Council to court when it refused to put the issue on the ballot as required by law. When the Ohio Supreme Court forced council to comply, voters crushed the cameras at the polls.

It was perhaps that resounding statement from the electorate that has rendered the council almost inert, with several choosing not to run for reelection. Two are retiring, one is quitting, and two others are running for other offices.

Candidate Profiles

So who are the five candidates confident they can turn around this beached municipal vehicle? Here are our summary impressions, presented in reverse order of their appearance at the July 14 mayoral

forum. We can say that the field as a whole presents five candidates who truly care for their city and aspire to lead its restoration. Whether all or any of them can are up to that task is an open question, and voters will decide which two of them most deserve further examination.

Donald Grossmyer is a city cop, a third-generation Maple Heights guy through and through. He lives in his grandmother's house and has worked for the city since 1987, eventually following in his father's footsteps and becoming a Maple Heights police officer. He sees crime as rampant and notes the lack of community, but offered no real suggestions as to how to tackle the city's many tough issues. His lack of applicable managerial experience was palpable, and he tried to treat it as a strength by promising to study the issues freshly.

Neomia Mitchell projected a clear understanding of the city's issues. "We're in a crisis," she said that did not happen overnight and will not be fixed in a couple of years. A former member of city council, and a former county employee, she possesses a sense of how government should work and a belief that hers is the steady hand that can make it work. She and her husband moved to Maple Heights and built a new home in 1990. She says its market value is now less than 1/2 of its original value. One of her first actions would be to hire an economic development director. She would work to build better relationships with the city's neighbors, and said that neither the feds nor the state nor the county want to work with the present administration.

Frank Rives is another lifelong Maple resident who expressed real nostalgia for the city he remembers as a kid. He describes himself as a state certified business analyst and a 20-year Air Force veteran who rose to rank of First Sergeant. A former county employee, Rives said he had managed a staff of 225,

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THE WORD ON SMALL BUSINESS

Pay Credit When it's Due

By Kirby Freeman
Press Correspondent



Ask any credit card holder who is trying to buy a big-ticket item like a car or a home just how important a personal credit score can be and they will give a resounding "Yes"! But, just like a high credit score can make a big difference in buying a shiny new sports car, a high credit score can make all the difference in an entrepreneur's ability to build a business.

Most business owners usually pay attention to two business scores — their personal credit scores, and the scores of their businesses. Personal credit scores are calculated and reported through three companies — TransUnion, Experian PLC, and Equifax Inc. — and are generally rated in a range from 300 to 850. Business

credit scores are also reported through three companies — Equifax, Experian, and Dun and Bradstreet's Paydex Score — and are rated from 0 to 100.

Despite what many new business owners may believe should be the case, most banks and other lending institutions do not simply look at a small business's ability to re-pay a business loan. Nearly all lenders require small business owners to provide personal guarantees on the loans to their operations. These guarantees require lenders to review an entrepreneur's credit record.

Banks and other lending institutions rely on personal and business credit reports from the various credit reporting companies to help them make decisions on whether to make business loans to entrepreneurs.

The personal FICO credit scores — named after the FICO company [once known as the

Fair Isaac Company — is based on several factors. Observers indicate that 35% of a credit agency's estimation of a credit score is based on an individual's payment history; 30% is based on the amount of loans an individual owes; 15% is based on the length of credit history; 10% is based on the types of credit an individual owes; and 10% is based on the amount of new credit inquiries.

Federal regulatory rules make it improper for lenders to require individuals or businesses to demonstrate a certain credit score in order to obtain a loan. However, it should be understood that most traditional banks will not lend to business owners with credit scores below the mid-600s (say around 640 to 660).

This is where the reality begins to hit most individuals with a dream to build their own businesses. When lenders make

decisions about an individual's credit ability, they can only rely on the credit history of that individual. That should be expected; most individuals make those same decision based on the same set of factors. The test of whether a person is a good credit risk is how well that person has been able to conduct his or her personal affairs in the past — i.e., past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior.

The biggest disappointment for most small business lenders comes from discovering poor personal credit decisions of individual entrepreneurs. Some of the best business ideas are cut off at the very beginning by the low credit scores of individual entrepreneurs.

Although bankers will never tell you that a 600 score alone will keep you from getting a loan, when several loans in a

row are being made to individuals with 750 to 850 credit scores, a business banker acting as a champion for an individual with a 625 personal credit score is going to have some serious explaining to do with their credit underwriters.

It is vital for any individual who is considering become a small business owner to focus on getting his or her financial house in order. Make sure all utility, medical, car notes, and mortgage payments are made on time. Take these steps long before you go to bankers hat in hand seeking a loan.

Entrepreneurs need to take care of their personal affairs wisely long before asking anyone else to help them build their dreams. In order to get serious about building a business, prospective business owners need to get serious about paying their personal bills.

LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Local and regional business listings from around northeast Ohio region.

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CAPITAL BEAT



► **Michele Silva Arredondo** of Lorain has been appointed by Gov. Kasich to serve as a judge on the Lorain County Court of Common Pleas. Arredondo will assume office on September 16, 2015 and must run in November 2016 to retain the seat for the remainder of the unexpired term, which ends December 31, 2018. Arredondo is replacing Judge James M. Burge, who resigned.

Arredondo received her B.A. from Miami University and her law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

► **J. Patrick McDonald** of Rocky River and Allan C. Krulak of Cleveland have been reappointed to the State Lottery Commission for terms beginning August 14, 2015 and ending August 1, 2018.

► **Madhu Singh** of Akron has been appointed to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission for a term beginning June 12, 2015 and ending July 28, 2019.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

► Saturday, September 19, 2015

“Psst: Wanna Be an Entrepreneur?”

The National Black MBA Association, Cleveland Chapter, and JumpStart are presenting a program to help guide people who are considering launching a business. Keynote speaker for the event is Ron Jones, CEO of the Copius Group and President and COO of the largest black-owned commercial baking company, New Horizons.

The program, will run from 10am-1pm with a continental breakfast offered at 9:30am. JumpStart will host the program at its offices, 6701 Carnegie Ave. RSVP by Sept. 16 at goo.gl/D9schf

► Sept 24 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

10,000 Small Businesses offers program look-see

The Goldman Sachs 10K Small Business Program is gaining a reputation as a learning and networking tool to help small but established businesses take the necessary steps to reach the next level.

This Thursday session offers interested or prospective program

applicants to get an inside peek as to what the program is all about. Learn about the program by visiting Tri-C's Advanced Technologies Training Center, Room 139, 3409 Woodland Ave., and participating in a mini-10ksb session, and engaging with a panel of local small business owners who graduated from the program.

There will be a free lunch buffet and networking opportunities.

Space is limited to the first 50 registrants. Register by contacting Sylvia Rios, Cuyahoga Community College at 10ksb@tri-c.edu or 216-987-3220.

► September 28, 2015 11:00AM-4:30PM

Ohio MSDC Supplier Diversity Exchange

Join the Ohio MSDC for lunch, workshops and a Networking Reception at Quicken Loans Arena. Corporate procurement professionals and subject matter experts will share next and best practices to build an advanced Supplier Diversity program. Learn more by visiting ohiomdsc.org/aws/SCOMSDC/pt/sd/calendar/39199/_PARENT/layout_details/false#sthash.khOcDhin.dpuf

CIVIC CALENDAR

► “A Tale of Two Plantations” kicks off fall series at Case Western

Richard Dunn, a professor of American History at the University of Pennsylvania, and winner of a 2015 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, will speak at Case Western Reserve in the University's Allen Memorial Medical Library's Ford Auditorium comparing Caribbean slavery with that in the U.S. He will speak Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 5pm.

In his talk, Dunn will compare slave life on the two plantations, demonstrating the huge demographic difference between the British

Caribbean and the U.S. slave systems, and showing how the black people on both plantations suffered horribly, but in strikingly dissimilar ways.

A book sale and signing will immediately follow the reading.

The event is free and open to the public. Registration is recommended: humanities.case.edu/wpgforms/registration-a-tale-of-two-plantations/.

► LWV forming East Cleveland chapter

The League of Women Voters will hold an organizational meeting to form an East Cleveland chapter at the East Cleveland Public Library, 144101 Euclid Ave. on Saturday, September 12 at 4pm.

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COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

► **The Phillis Wheatley Association** is hosting a golf outing on **September 18** at the easily accessible Briardale Golf Course in Euclid. Contributions go directly to support capital improvements at PWA's Camp Mueller, located in the heart of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Board president Thomas Harrington promises that in addition to golf there will be networking, challenging games, great prizes and lots of fun.

The Missionary Ministry of **Elizabeth Baptist Church** is hosting Generations of Spirit and Courage, a celebration in song and word on **Sunday, September 20 at 2p.** The Church is located at 6114 Francis Ave., Cleveland OH 44127.

The program will feature the Wings Over Jordan Celebration Chorus, Mother Willie Mae Wright and the Wright Family Singers, and Elegie performing a mix of spirituals, classic, and contemporary gospel favorites that have inspired generations

over time. Dr. Regennia Williams, recently retired from Cleveland State University, will provide narration.

All are welcome. There will be a free will offering.

► **Nominations open for The Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award**

Nominations are open for two community awards presented by Community Solutions. The *Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award*—a \$20,000 prize—is given annually to a nonprofit organization for outstanding service. The annual **MTV Awards** are presented to people who volunteer their time and talent to help others via health and social service organizations. Nomination forms, as well as more information about both awards, may be found at www.CommunitySolutions.com. **Deadline for submission of nominations is September 18.** Both awards will be presented at the Celebration of Human Services, a free

event on Tuesday, Nov. 17; keynote speaker is Ronald Richard, President & CEO of the Cleveland Foundation.

► **Heaventrain Mentoring Program seeks volunteers**

Longtime education activist Donna Cummings is coordinating a mentoring program at East Tech HS that is seeking any caring adult willing to invest a small but consistent amount of time once a week between noon and 1:30 with a high school student. She will welcome your inquiry at either 877.629.5621, ext. 3 or donna@urbanlighthouse.org.

► **Case Western Reserve University Dental School offering free check-ups and x-rays**

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine is offering free dental exams and X-rays for first-time patients at the school's Comprehensive Care Clinic on Wednesday, Sept. 30.

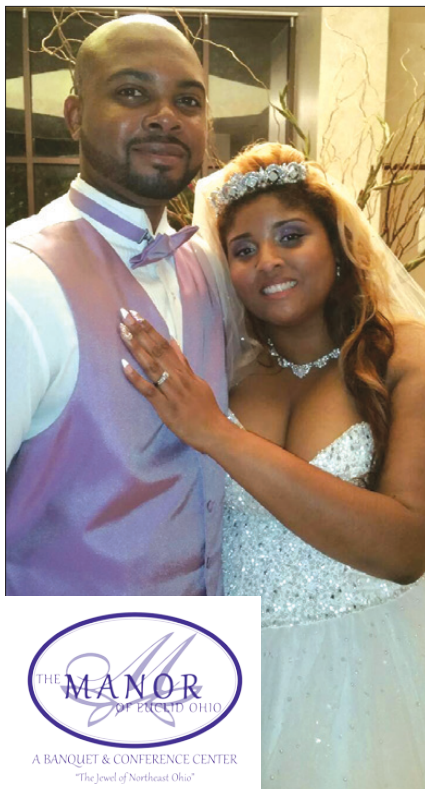
Such basic dental services typically cost about \$90.

To be eligible for the free service, you must be a first-time patient of the dental school clinic and at least 18 years old. Appointments are required. Call 216-368-8730 or 216-368-3200 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Patients will be treated by third- and fourth-year dental students, under the supervision of dental school faculty members.

Patients will be accepted for appointment at either 12:30 p.m. or 2:30 p.m. Appointments take about 1 1/2 to two hours. The clinic is at 2124 Cornell Rd., on the Case Western Reserve campus.

A basic dental checkup and medical history may indicate symptoms of high blood pressure, diabetes or other health concerns a patient may not even be aware of. If such symptoms are detected during the exam, patients will be referred to their doctor.



THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE: Ernest and Deanna Williams

Ernest Williams was unwavering in his pursuit of true love with Deanna Moore, notwithstanding a stroke, two seizures, and a bout with cancer.

Which is not to say the course of true love on his way was smooth all the way to their exchange of vows on August 22. The ceremony at the Manor Banquet and Conference Center culminated two years of allowing God to prepare them for each other.

"I sent her a message on Facebook, telling her how I saw different things she was posting and how beautiful I thought she was and that I wanted to meet with her," Ernest recalled. But his intended had more than a few reservations upon receiving his message. "I had made a pact with God that I didn't want to date unless (God showed me) it was going to be my husband," she confessed.

Despite her list of "husband" specifics, her doubting friends, and internal cautions, Ernest's message resonated. His respectful approach earned

him a Monday evening "pre-date" at a downtown Mexican restaurant where they broke the ice and began to get acquainted. A second date and numerous conversations followed, which eventually eased Deanna's nervous heart as well as some cautions Ernest had from prior health and financial challenges. Time and Godly counsel soon revealed that love and a marriage proposal were imminent.

After leading her to believe a proposal would come later, Ernest took Deanna to her favorite restaurant, presumably to celebrate a new job she was to start. He so surprised her as he knelt on one knee and proposed that it took her a few moments to get out the words "Yes! Of course!" The entire restaurant then broke into applause.

Deanna was no stranger to The Manor, having previously enjoyed numerous events there. "I had talked to (Manager) Angela Newby in previous dealings. Whenever I would get ner-

vous, she would calm me down, always assuring that everything is going to be all right. It was the same for the wedding." So when the two needed a combination of "very reasonable" pricing, great food, and team guidance through the planning stage, led by the coordinating expertise of Ashlynn Childs, the Manor had no competition. "I didn't know that the food and service was going to be as elaborate as it was for the price. The tasting process was great. Even the cost-cutting advice was good—like recommending cupcakes instead of a cake in our situation," Deanna described. "The ambiance itself was beautiful."

"Whatever we needed they brought to us—and not slowly," added Ernest. "Everything was just done well."

To prospective wedding couples, he offers the following testimony. "You can expect that everyone who works there will do whatever they can to make sure everything is done right."



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MAYOR'S PROXY SUING COUNCIL IN BATTLE OVER POTENTIAL MERGER WITH CLEVELAND

EAST CLEVELAND FAILS TO SUBMIT RECOVERY PLAN



Mayor Gary Norton & City Council President Barbara Thomas



By **R. T. Andrews**
Editor

East Cleveland officials missed a deadline imposed by the State Financial Planning and Supervision Commission last month. Under state law, this means the city will be required beginning September 1 to restrict its monthly spending to 85% of whatever it spent in the corresponding month of the previous year.

The city's failure came to light during a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission, held August 31 at the East Cleveland Library.

East Cleveland was declared by State Auditor Dave Yost to be in a state of fiscal emergency in October 2012. The declaration triggered numerous requirements under state law including the formation of the commission, which includes Mayor Gary Norton and Barbara Thomas, city council president. The two are former political allies are now bitter political opponents who regularly trade

insults and accusations back and forth.

Sharon Hanrahan, who chairs the commission and works under the auspices of the state auditor, had repeatedly told city officials that a Revised Recovery Plan was due Aug. 24 and the main purpose of the Aug. 31 meeting was to review and vote on the plan. The mayor implied in his report that he delivered the plan to council in time for them to sign off on it. Thomas replied that council did not receive the plan until Aug. 27 and was unlikely to approve it in any event.

The inability of mayor and council to be civil to one another in service of the public good makes it highly unlikely the city will be able to emerge from its fiscal woes. The relationship between mayor and council has seemed toxic to some observers for at least the past decade, irrespective of who was sitting in which chair or what policy issues might be up for decision.

As the city's financial condition continues to deteriorate, the mayor has moved,

quietly at first but not very much openly, to push merger with Cleveland as East Cleveland's only viable option. Numerous scenarios presented by commission staff would appear to confirm that East Cleveland's future is bleak and its fiscal survival in grave doubt. Staff suggested that the numbers indicate that even if the City laid off more than a fourth of city workers and borrowed the maximum amount allowed by law under present circumstances [about \$5 million], and got most of its creditors to accept fifty cents on the dollar, the continuing decline in its tax base means that the city would barely be able to put a dent in its outstanding debt, which appears somewhere north of \$3 million.

Several residents in the audience kept up a steady grumble of discontent at virtually everything the mayor said. However, there was assent when he did wryly observe "nobody believes the mayor anyway."

The merger issue, which council as a whole oppos-

es, along with a sizable and very vocal group of residents, came into the discussion on several points. Top attorneys from the auditor's office, including chief legal counsel Mark Altier, were on hand to discuss aspects of municipal bankruptcy, annexation, and merger, including potential effects upon the East Cleveland School District.

Other information trickled out as a result of the antagonistic positions of mayor and council, including the fact that the mayor's chief of staff, has sued the council members for failing to select three city residents to negotiate merger terms with their Cleveland counterparts. But council has questioned the legality of petitions submitted by the mayor's allies that would trigger the merger negotiations and has asked the county prosecutor to investigate the petition process for evidence of illegalities. Each side is represented by a downtown law firm.

The next commission meeting has been set for September 30 at 1:30pm.

THE REAL DEAL
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ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

▶ **Check out this video about the first GOP presidential debate** held last month here in Cleveland: <https://youtu.be/IfBtzlaVNDk>. It was conceived and produced by Next Level Media Group, spearheaded by some local black businesspeople with big ideas.

▶ **Mark your calendar for the next GOP debate on September 16**, and the first Democratic Presidential Primary Debate on October 13. Both will be produced by CNN.



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Thursday, October 22, 2015 @ noon

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Hooper Farms founder aims to make city a greenhouse mecca



Erich Hooper at gateway to Hooper Farms. Photography by Randy O. Norfus

By Derek K. Dixon
Press Correspondent

Erich Hooper was willing to suspend the one-hour tour of his historic property just to retrieve a discarded three-inch lawnmower spindle. His concern for what others find useless is largely why Cleveland enjoys its lofty urban farming reputation.

“One of the kids probably threw it away working on a project I gave him,” the owner of historic Hooper Farms said while inspecting the plastic yellow object. “My belief is that everything and everyone has a purpose. You don’t throw it out.”

Hooper Farms, tucked away in the historic Tremont district, is the neighborhood’s only remaining African American business and its primary setting for youth farming advocacy and devel-

opment. In 1990, urban farming’s survival in Cleveland depended on what was usually Hooper’s lone voice; but his own childhood memories kept him motivated.

“As a kid, I’d always wondered where my food came from and found out it was right outside my door. That was a good thing because it enabled me to be a little entrepreneur. I would sell the berries and the fruits that we’d pick off the tree. We would make lemonade and sell that over in the Hough area. So the opportunity to utilize food and make money was a no-brainer once we got older.”

During the emergence of Hooper Farms in 1994, Hooper opened his land and experience to school age Clevelanders. “We were pretty lucky (to keep the kids’ attention) when we started educating back then because the cell phone and Internet hadn’t really hit yet. So

the opportunity for the kids to concentrate on the farming process twenty to twenty-five years ago was there.”

Hooper still faced resistance from the community. “The real hard sell was trying to convince people that urban farming could take place again in the city of Cleveland. At one time Old Brooklyn was the greenhouse capital of the United States, and we produced one heck of an amount of food. In trying to resell this idea, since the schools were defunded from gardening programs, we had to do a lot of it pro bono.”

Fast-forwarding to the past few years, the dedication has paid off. In 2013, Hooper’s efforts resulted in beautifying a section of Lincoln West High School with nineteen raised beds of produce despite the cold weather and lack of funding for horticultural programs. Nishimwe S.,



a 17-year-old student there, is glad for the experience. “I really liked that farm. I worked for Mr. Hooper about a year, and now he has a program at my school,” he said.

This past January, Warrensville Heights resident Almitra H. reached out to Hooper Farms to help her add vegetables to her garden profile despite the disruptive presence of cottonwood trees. Previously, her property contained only grape and blackberry vines. “Although I only have your card,” she wrote to Hooper on his Facebook page, “I look forward to my family becoming more involved with the farm.”

Cleveland resident Minette H. became a supporter after trying a Hooper Farm original product. “Try the Ghost Honey!” she enthuses. “It’s sweet with the right hint of heat.” Ghost Honey is completely organic and its production is a staple of Hooper’s youth instruction curriculum.

These testimonies among hundreds more from educational and agricultural professionals throughout the area represent what Hooper sees as

“We need to have something like Disneyland where we can grow, produce, manufacture, operate, sell and have an attraction that will be one-of-a-kind in the United States.”

only the tip of the iceberg on Cleveland’s road to inner city economic recovery.

“As I told Mayor Frank Jackson’s staff, there needs to be a conscious effort that if we’re going to level parts of the city and tear down the abandoned housing, we could build a Disneyland-sized farm. Let’s say you have thirty or sixty acres. This is going to be something that puts the city of Cleveland on the map.”

Hooper doesn’t mince words when expressing the immense need beyond the current trend of erecting high tunnel houses and separate community gardens for the relatively ambitious few. “Those were great concept ideas, but they got it wrong. We need to have something like Disneyland where we can grow, produce, manufacture, operate, sell and have an attraction that will be one-of-a-kind in the United States. This is the destination of urban farming in the city of Cleveland—to be the greenhouse capital that uses our waterways and railways to ship all over the world.”



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Women in the Church Continued from Page 1

women may not read the announcements; women may not speak in any kind of way.

"If that indeed happened, no church would be able to function because we just said in 80 percent of churches, the work is done by women."

Indeed, the idea of women serving in the African American church is beyond cliché; it's a truism.

In 2009, a Pew Research Center survey found almost 60 percent of African American women attended church at least once a week. "No group of men or women from any other racial or ethnic background exhibits comparably high levels of religious observance," the organization said.

When African American women go to church, they go to black churches. According to the Pew survey, 62 percent of Black women attend histori-

cally black Protestant institutions such as AME, AME Zion, Church of God in Christ and the black Baptist denominations. By comparison, 55 percent of African American men attend these churches.

Despite those numbers, men own positions, such as bishop, elder or trustee, that determine the direction of the church or its policies and procedures.

The Sway of Tradition

"Churches, congregants as well as pastors historically have been comfortable with women as teachers," says Rev. Leah CK Lewis. She heads the Church of the Good Shepherd, a Lutheran church on 186th and Harvard. "The missionary (auxiliary), whatever it may be in denominations, is often led by female."

Continued on Page 10

writers & readers SERIES OF HOPE



Mitchell S. Jackson

Saturday, September 19, 2015 • 2:00 p.m.

Mitchell S. Jackson's His writing career began while he was serving a 16-month sentence in prison. His novel, *The Residue Years* won several awards.

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Alvin "Dante" Yarbrough was born in East Cleveland, Ohio. He is passionate about people, particularly African American youth and wishes to convey a message to them or about them.

Emory Douglas • Saturday, September 26 • 2:00 p.m.

Emory Douglas was politically involved as Revolutionary Artist, then Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party from February 1967 through the early 1980s.

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Women in the Church Continued from Page 9

So what are women who aspire to pastor doing?

Thirty years ago, scholars C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence C. Mamiya discovered these women were leaving historically black denominations for predominantly white churches, like the United Church of Christ.

Clayton Jenkins has found a home in such a denomination. But Clayton Jenkins says she didn't consciously abandon a black denomination; she just went where God led her.

Clayton Jenkins has been with the church for five years. Right now, she's overseeing a major building campaign for the church's new, 10-acre home that was a former Catholic church in South Euclid. The plans include building a new sanctuary that will seat about 450 people and changing a former school into a youth wing.

Yet working for a mainstream denomination doesn't guarantee equality. Clayton Jenkins' pay is just now ap-

proaching that of the person she replaced.

"I began my pastorate here making significantly less than my male predecessor, though I had more work to do because we're building a church and the congregation is bigger under my leadership than it ever was. This was the first year that my pay began to start at what his starting salary was."

Lincoln and Mamiya noted women were leaving historically black denominations to start their own congregations. Rev. Jacquelyn Ragin followed that path after taking over an existing Baptist church that had been struggling. She launched a non-denominational "Run With Endurance Ministries" that meets at the Shore Cultural Center in Euclid.

"Bapti-costal"

While the decision to start anew flowed naturally, she said the new congregation reflects the changes in African American religion life. For example, she de-

"She's the backbone of the African American church, but seldom its head. 'We're comfortable in women serving, just not in the senior pastor role.'"

scribes her congregation as "Bapti-costal": a Baptist foundation with a Pentecostal worship style.

"Younger folks aren't interested in denominations," she says. "They're interested in having their needs met and their problems solved."

"It doesn't make sense to stick to something based on tradition and not move to something based on the needs of the people we serve."

She says she's constantly hearing from women who are called to leadership. And while she counsels answering that call in some untra-



ditional ways — by starting non-profits, working with formerly incarcerated women, or becoming an influencer through social media — she admits that the pulpit is the ultimate leadership role for most church-going African Americans.

"If you come up in the church, the most prominent role you see is the one of the pastor," Ragin says. "So when people realize they're

called, they start looking at that role. There's no creativity being displayed in a lot of churches, so that's the focus."

That's why she predicts congregations that don't feed women's hunger to lead may starve to death.

"Eventually some of the denominations are going to die out because women who're very active, they're going to go on to where opportunities are."

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Sept. 8 Mayoral Primary May Suggest New Course For Maple Heights

Continued from Page 2

administered a budget of \$30 million, and worked successfully with three unions as a public servant. He said he had a blueprint to lead the city and that as mayor he would reinstitute snow removal for seniors. Citing what he said was the Maple's 26% commercial vacancy rate and 725 vacant houses, he said he would institute citywide housing inspections and terminate some city contracts for municipal services with third party vendors.

Annette Blackwell is a tax analyst who claims familiarity with tax abatement and can boast of having managed a \$13 million dollar portfolio. A 26-year resident of the city, she possesses associate and business degrees and prior employment with Key Bank and US Bank. In addition to her career, Blackwell and her husband own a business within the city limits. She described Maple as having become synonymous with crime, foreclosure and tumbling housing values. She proposed to establish a strong working relationship with the state auditor to lead the city out of fiscal emergency, to update the city's housing stock, and to foster new development.

Bill Brownlee is the new kid in town and he acts like it. He and his wife grew up on farms in Pennsylvania. He keeps a buzz cut, perhaps a legacy from his four years as a Marine who served in Fallujah. He and his wife moved to greater Cleveland in 2011 so he could attend broadcasting school. They found a foreclosed home in Maple, bought it for \$7500, fixed it up and live in it with their five children. As a homeowner, he began to realize how important politics is, decided to become involved and was stunned to discover the level of dysfunction in his new hometown. He takes a direct approach to most things so he ran for and won the neighborhood council seat. Since then he has studied government, clashed incessantly with colleagues, and generally alienated them to the point where

in a fit of petulant despair over his constant questioning and annoying hectoring, censured him for being Bill Brownlee. A staunch proponent of open government, he videotapes every council meetings and posts the videos online.

Place your bets

So who will emerge from this quintet to duel for the honor of leading a broke city back to fiscal and communal health? Each candidate possesses a hook that will appeal to some segment of the electorate. Grossmyer represents the Maple that was a halcyon of long ago. Enough old-timers — always the most consistent voters — may remain to get him to November, though it's hard to see him beating any of his rivals head-to-head. Rives is a Grossmyer of a different color, a military background instead of a civilian police force [not much difference in the Fergusons of the world!]. His gaze appears, like Grossmyer's, fixed on the rearview mirror.

Mitchell is far and away the most experienced candidate politically, and probably the best bet to make the runoff. She takes the long view, moves with caution, and appears to be a team builder.

Blackwell seems the most grounded in the nuts and bolts of finance but may suffer from the carpenter's malady: when your tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. It would not be a surprise to see her in the November runoff.

While Brownlee might seem on the surface to have no chance, it would be wrong to underestimate him. As sitting Ward 5 councilman, he's the only candidate with a current electoral base. He doesn't seem to know his weaknesses, which helps him be a true believer, a tireless worker who keeps his eye on the prize. He's the most likely candidate to finish anywhere from first to last.

If Maple Heights had a municipal beer, it would be Dos Equis. Because its politics are the most interesting around.